8 regional centres for ID cards being set up

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD, Jan 1: National Data Base Organisation is setting up eight regional centres under the direct supervision of Pakistan army for issuance of new national identity cards and computerization of demographic data collected during census this year.

The regional centres which will be established in eight major cities — Lahore, Multan, Sargodha, Karachi, Quetta, Sukkur, Peshawar and Islamabad — will be manned by an acting brigadier assisted by a Lt. Colonel or a Colonel and two majors.

National Data Base having the status of autonomous body will generate funds for its operations by charging an amount of Rs90 each for the issuance of a new computerised Identity Cards.

The NDBO during the last census had collected around 65 million forms from all over the country. The data collected through these forms will be computerised. New identity cards will be issued on the basis of this data.

The cards will be delivered through couriers and before handing over the card the courier will receive Rs90 per identity card. Fauji Foundation is expected to get the contract for production of the new identity cards.

The plan of issuing new fool proof cards has been pending for over a decade. Under the first government of Benazir Bhutto, a contract was awarded to a foreign computer company but later, it was cancelled by Nawaz Sharif government.

Demographic experts have designed demographic data base after studying experience of various countries including America, Denmark and some other developed countries, said a source.

It will be totally different from the other countries as it has been designed after studying all such programmes of different countries, he added.

With the computerised data base all the details about any resident of Pakistan including his property, his arms license, number of vehicle (s) owned by him and other information could be obtained by one push of button, he said.

A great deal of skepticism, however, prevails as to how they the organisation would complete the gargantuan task of feeding 65 million forms into the computer.

The information collected through the national data base forms would further verify the population census figures the authenticity of which has been questioned by different political parties, particularly those belonging to the smaller provinces, the source added.